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TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

I.—*The “Kols” of Chota-Nagpore.* By Lieut-Col. E. T. DALTON, Commissioner of Chota-Nagpore.

[Read January 8th, 1867.]

THE country called Chota (or properly Chuttia) Nagpore* is the eastern portion of the extensive plateau of Central India, on which are the sources of the Koel, the Soobunreka, the Damoodah, and other less known Indian rivers. It extends into Sirgoojah, and forms what is called the Oopur Ghat or highland of Juspore, and it is connected by a continuous chain of hills with the Vindhyan and Kymore ranges, from which flow affluents of the Ganges, and with the highlands of Omerkuntuck, on which are the sources of the Nurbudda. That the population of this watershed is found to be, for the most part, a heterogeneous collection of non-Aryan tribes, is in itself a fair proof that these tribes were at one time the inhabitants of the plains who, driven from their original sites at different periods by Braminical invaders, gradually fell back, following converging lines of rivers in their retreat, till, from different directions, nations, some bearing marks of common origin though separated for ages, others bearing no trace of such affinity, met at the sources of the streams, and formed new nationalities in the secure asylum they found there.

The plateau averages more than 2,000 feet above the sea level; it is on all sides somewhat difficult of access, and it is owing to the security thus given, that the primitive tribes, still found on it, retained for ages so much of their independence and idiosyncrasy. After overcoming the difficulties of the approach, these first settlers must have rejoiced at finding they had not merely reached the summit of a range of hills, but had ascended to a new country, well suited to their wants,

* *I.e.* Little Nagpore.—EDITOR.

and out of reach of their enemies; and here they made their final stand.

They found a genial climate at this elevation, and a well-wooded undulating country, divided and diversified by interior ranges of hills, uplifting the fertilising streams, or breaking out in rocky excrescences, sometimes in vast semi-globular masses of granite, like sunken domes of gigantic temples, sometimes in huge fragments piled in most fantastic forms, viewed with awe by the new settlers as the dwelling-places of the local gods.

The total area of the plateau thus occupied is about 7,000 square miles, and the present population may be estimated at a million; more than half of whom are of the race best known to us by the name of "Kol."

This word is one of the epithets of abuse applied by the Braminical races to the aborigines of the country who opposed their early settlement, and it has adhered to the primitive inhabitants of Chota-Nagpore for ages. It includes many tribes: the people of this province to whom it is generally applied, are either Moondah or Oraon; and though these races are now found in many parts of the country occupying the same villages, cultivating the same fields, celebrating together the same festivals, and enjoying the same amusements, they are of totally distinct origin and cannot intermarry without loss of caste.

The received tradition is, that the Moondahs first occupied the country, and had been long settled there, when the Oraons made their appearance. The Moondahs believe themselves to be autochthonous, or at all events declare that they are all descended from one man and woman, who were produced or established themselves, at a place called Satyomba, which is revered by the whole tribe as the cradle of the race.

Satyomba is the name of a *pergunnah** on the edge of the plateau overlooking the valley of the Damoodah. It is not improbable that the Moondah race had previously occupied a position on that river, and that, in departing from it, the division took place which separated them from their brethren the Sonthals. The Sonthals, unquestionably a branch of the same people, have to this day a veneration for the Damoodah, and call it their *sea*; and the ashes of their dead are always preserved till they have the opportunity of disposing of them by throwing them into that stream or burying them near its banks. The Sonthals, remaining in the plains, had easy access to the river and retained their veneration for it. The Moondahs, settling on the highlands, were less faithful to it, but

* Correctly, *pargana*, a district or province.—EDITOR.

from its name they might claim it as their own ; for, though Damoodur has been adopted as one of the sacred names of “Krishno,” does not Dah-Moondah in their own language mean “the water of the Moondah”?

We find the Moondah settlements chiefly in the eastern and southern parts of Chota-Nagpore, the Oraons predominating in the western ; and this strengthens the hypothesis that the Moondahs ascended from the eastern side of the plateau.

The intimate connection between the Sonthals, the Bhoomij, and the Chota-Nagpore Moondah tribes, has long been known. I have pointed out their affinity with the Korewahs of Sirgoojah and Juspoor, and have given some account of that wild clan.* I have now to add to the list the Kheriahs, another aboriginal tribe settled on the plateau of Chota-Nagpore, and the Juangas of the Cuttack tributary mehals,† whose women are so conservative in their notions, that they still adhere to the fashion in dress first introduced by mother Eve, and wear nothing but leaves. I had often met with individuals and families of the Kheriah tribe, living in mixed communities, but from contact with other races they had lost much of their individuality, and I found it difficult to place them.

This year I happened to come upon some of their principal settlements in pergunnah Bussiah, on the southern borders of the portion of the plateau occupied by the Moondahs, and collected round me the elders of the tribe. These settlements all lie near the Koel, one of the streams from the watershed of Chota-Nagpore, which, after its union with the Sunkh in Gangpore, becomes the Bramni and terminates its career at Point Palmyras.

The Kheriahs venerate the Koel as the Sonthals the Damoodah. They were in all probability once settled on its banks in the lowlands, and clinging to it in their retreat and adopting the place of refuge that it led to, regard it still as communicating with their fatherland, and with this idea the urns containing the ashes of their dead are dashed into a rock-broken rapid of the river, so that their contents may be rapidly borne away by the current to mingle with the ashes of their forefathers.

They say their first settlement was Pora, a village on the Koel, and that there were no Moondahs in the country, at least in that part of it, when their ancestors first came there. There is sufficient resemblance between the Kheriahs and Moondahs in language and customs and appearance, to make

* Asiatic Soc. Journal, vol. xxxiv, p. 1.

† Correctly, *mahal*, from the Arabic, a department.—EDITOR.

us certain of their consanguinity, and at the same time sufficient divergence to lead to the inference that the relationship is a remote one, and that the two branches of the family had been long separated when they met again on the banks of the Koel. These points of resemblance and divergence I will describe, when treating of the manners and customs of the race generally.

The Juangas or Puttoons (leaf-clad) are noticed in a paper by Mr. E. A. Samuells.* They are found in the Cuttack tributary mehuls of Keonjur, Pal Lehra, Dhekenal, and Hindole. They are thus isolated from all other branches of the Moondah family, and have not themselves the least notion of their connection with them; but their language, a specimen of which is given in the table appended, shews they are of the same race, and that their nearest kinsmen are the Kheriahs, a fragment of the tribe left behind when the remainder ascended the valley of the Koel. The Hos of Singbhoom have a tradition that they once wore leaves only, and not long ago threatened to revert to them, unless cloth-sellers lowered their prices!

The Bhoomij form the majority of the population in all the estates of the Manbhoom district to the south of the Kassae river. As they approach the confines of Chota-Nagpore, they appear to be called indiscriminately Moondahs or Bhoomij, and they intermarry. More in the east the Bhoomij have become Hindooised, or rather Bengaleeised, to a great extent, and many of them have acquired considerable estates, like the Mankees of Chota-Nagpore, and positions of influence as "Sirdar Ghatwalls," the hereditary custodians of the passes.

The characteristics of the tribe that they most tenaciously cling to, are the national dances and songs. The Bhoomij appear to have been the first to colonise the large pergunnah called Dhulbhoom or Ghatsillah, attached to the Singbhoom district. The Rajah or Zemindar is, in all probability, himself a Bhoomij by race, though (without thereby improving his pedigree, so far as I can see) he endeavours to conceal his extraction under one of those hazy traditions that Brahmins always have ready for families in want of them. His ancestor, according to their version, was a washerman, a Dhoby who saved the goddess Kali,† when, as Runkini, she ran away from Pochete. Discredit has attached to the Bhoomij and Sonthal in consequence of the human sacrifices offered at this shrine of

* Asiatic Soc. Journal, vol. xxv, p. 295, 1856.

† Kali or Durga, spouse of Siwa, "the destroyer" of the Tendu Triad.—
EDITOR.

Runkini, but the whole establishment and ritual are essentially Braminical. The Bhoomij and Sonthal races personally do not much care for the bloodthirsty goddess. The Bhoomij is the branch of the Moondah race that has spread farthest in an eastern direction. Bhoomij are to be found in Mohurbhunj and Keonjur, though perhaps not so much at home there as in Dhulbhoom.

The Sonthals are now chiefly massed in the Sonthal Pergunnahs, but they muster strong in Mohurbhunj, and there are several colonies of them in the Singbhoom district. They are an erratic race, and their ancient traditions are lost in the history of their modern migrations; but my idea is that their chief settlements in Bengal were once on the Damoodah river, and that they gave way to the Koormees, an industrious Hindoo race, who now form the bulk of the population in that part of Manbhoom.

In a southerly direction the next tribe of "Dasyus" that we come across are the Khunds, but I am unable to trace any point of resemblance between them and the Moondah, either in their religion, with its morbid superstitions and horrible human sacrifices, or in their language.

To trace the further ramifications of the Moondahs, we must proceed west, not south, and take up the link in the hills and highest table-lands of Sirgoojah and Juspore, where we find the wildest of the race in the Korewahs. I have given a brief note on them in the paper above quoted, and have only to add that the Korewahs are quite unaware of the connectionship between themselves and the Kols. They do not acknowledge, and do not see, that the languages are almost identical. This would not, I conceive, have been the case if the Korewahs had broken off from their Satyomba kinsfolk.

The Korewahs are another branch of the family, and the history of their migrations is no doubt an independent one. It is probable that they were forced back into the hills they now occupy by the Gooands, as a Hindooised clan of that people became the dominant race in the plains of Sirgoojah. Moreover, as pointed out by Mr. G. Campbell, at a late meeting of the Asiatic Society, we have in its *Journal** a brief notice of a tribe called "Coour Gooand," and a vocabulary which proves them to be not Gooand at all, but another branch of the great family we are describing, occupying the Gavilghur range of hills near Ellichpore. Dr. Latham mentions in connection with them another tribe which he calls Chunah, but I have no further information about them. If the investigation be carried out, we

* Asiatic Soc. Journal, vol. xiii, p. 19.

shall, no doubt, find connecting links in the intervening ranges of hills.

Thus we have in the Coours of Ellichpoor, the Korewahs of Sirgoojah and Juspore, the Moondahs and the Kheriahs of Chota-Nagpore, the Hos of Singbhoom, the Bhoomij of Manbhoom and Dhulbhoom, and the Sonthals of Manbhoom, Singbhoom, Cuttack, tributary mehals, Hazareebagh, and the Sonthal Pergunnahs (the author of the introduction to the Sonthal language, the Rev. J. Phillips, adds "Nākāles and Kodas," I do not know where they are to be found), a kindred people sufficiently numerous, if united, to form a nation of several millions of souls. They were, in all probability, one of the tribes that were most persistent in their hostility to the Aryan invaders, and thus earned for themselves the epithets of "worshippers of mad gods," "haters of Brahmins," "ferocious lookers," "inhuman," "flesh-eaters," "devourers of life," "possessed of magical powers," "changing their shape at will."* To this day, the Aryans settled in Chota-Nagpore and Singbhoom firmly believe that the Moondahs have powers as wizards and witches, and can transform themselves into tigers and other beasts of prey, with the view of devouring their enemies, and that they can witch away the lives of man and beast. It is to the wildest and most savage of the tribe that such powers are generally ascribed; and amongst the Kols themselves the belief in the magic powers of their brethren is so strong, that I have heard converts to Christianity assert they were first induced to turn to our religion, because sorcery had apparently no power over those who were baptised! The upper classes of the Moondahs, those who aspire to be Zemindars,† have assumed the "*poita*" and taken to Brahmins and Kali, but the mass of the people adore their "mad gods" still, after their own primitive fashion. The great propitiatory sacrifices to the local deities or devils are carousals at which they eat, drink, sing, dance, and make love; but though the austere "munis" of old must have stood aghast at such wild ebullitions of devotion, it is a fact that, whilst the mass of the Kols have not taken to the worship of any Hindoo idols, the Hindoos settled in the province think it expedient to propitiate the gods of the Kols. It is gratifying that the darkness in which this primitive and interesting people have so long dwelt, is now being dispelled by a brighter light; that their paganism is at length yielding to the gentle influence of Christian teaching; that there is abroad amongst them a widespread feeling that a change is necessary,

* See Muir's Sanskrit texts.

† Correctly, *Zamindar*, a landholder, from the Persian.—EDITOR.

a change more perfect than can be typified by the adoption of a "*poita*."*

As the Moondahs first settled at Satyomba spread over the country, they formed themselves into communities called Purhas, or the country was divided into Purhas, each consisting of twelve or more villages under a chief. They do not appear in their earlier days to have acknowledged any chief, superior to the head of the Purha; the ordinary business of the community was conducted by him, and on extraordinary occasions, the Purha chiefs met and took counsel together.

Vestiges of this ancient system are still met with in many parts of the country. Though ignored as geographical or fiscal or territorial divisions, the Purhas still exist in the eyes of the people, and they still have chiefs whom they call Rajahs, men of influence and weight, who preside when a meeting is called to adjudicate regarding breaches of social observances, and who take the lead on the great hunting expeditions and national festivals.

It is said that the Moondahs were in a very wild state, occupying but a small portion of the plateau, when the Oraons, driven from the Rhotas hills, swarmed into the country, and sought and obtained permission to occupy it jointly with the Moondahs. Both Moondahs and Oraons declare there was on this occasion no fighting. The former were glad to obtain assistance in reclaiming the country they had adopted, and the Oraons are said to have come with large herds of cattle and implements of husbandry previously unknown to the Moondahs.

It is probable that the Moondahs of those days were not more advanced than are to this day their brethren, the hill Korewahs of Sirgoojah, a tribe that know not the use of the plough: but they were great hunters, and could sing and dance and make merry. The Oraon youths and maidens speedily acquired the songs and the steps, and this I doubt not aided greatly the harmonious blending of the two peoples.

There are no ancient temples or other antiquities on the plateau of Chota-Nagpore to indicate that the early Braminical races or Buddhists ever obtained a footing there; there is no tradition even of the "Munis"† having sought retreats amongst its rocks or by its waterfalls for their devotional exercises. We find such monuments in Sirgoojah to the very foot of the western face of the plateau; and, as I have recently described in a paper devoted to the antiquities of Manbhoom, we find

* Correctly, *paita*, a patch of level ground in a hilly country.—EDITOR.

† Muni, a Hindu saint.—EDITOR.

numerous remains of Ayran colonisation close to its southern and eastern approaches, but none on the plateau itself. Left to themselves, the Kols increased and multiplied, and lived a happy arcadian sort of life under their republican form of government for many centuries; but it is said that a wily Brahmin at last obtained a footing amongst them, and an important change in the form of government was the result.

The Rajah of the Purha of which Satyomba was the head quarters, was a Moondah named Madura. His occupation of the supposed cradle of the race gave him precedence in the confederate councils; and a child of his house, reared in it if not born there, was, through his influence and by the advice of a Brahmin he had taken into his service, elected supreme chief over the whole confederacy; but as it would not suit the noble family, his descendants, to have it supposed that their ancestor was one of the despised race called Kol, they have adopted the following legend as their origin:—

“When Jonmajoya, Rajah of Hustinapoor, attempted the destruction of the Nags or Serpent race, one of them, Poon-dorik, assumed the form of a Brahmin and went to the house of a Brahmin at Benares to study the ‘shasters.’ The Benares Brahmin, pleased with the intelligence and grace of his pupil, gave him his only daughter ‘Parbuttee’ to be his wife. Poon-dorik and his wife, Parbuttee, together visited Juggernath, and on their return, passing through this country, then called ‘Jharkhund,’ the forest land, she was seized with the pains of labour near Satyomba, and gave birth to a child and died.

“Madura’s Brahmin happening to pass, bearing an image of the sun worshipped by the Moondahs, saw the child sleeping and protected by a snake with expanded hood. The snake was Poondorik, relapsed into his original form. He addressed the Brahmin, told his own story and the story of the child’s birth, declared that the babe was destined to be a great Rajah, and that his name was to be Funimatuk Roy, ‘the snake hood crowned,’ a worshipper of the sun, whose image the Brahmin bore, and the Brahmin was to be the family priest. The snake then vanished. The child was taken to Madura’s house, and adopted and brought up with his own son, a boy of much the same age. When Funimatuk Roy was twelve years of age, Madura convened the Purha chiefs, and it is said the neighbouring Rajahs, including the Rajah of Sirgoojah and the Dytya Rajah, and suggested that one of the two lads should be selected as the Rajah of Nagpore. The lads were subjected to an examination, when it was found that the snake boy had already acquired all the accomplishments necessary for his destined position, while the other was a mere rustic. It was then

(according to the annals of the Nagbunsee family) ruled, that Funimatuk Roy and his heirs for ever should be the Rajahs, and that the Moondah's child and his descendants should bear burdens ; and thus, all who claim to hold lands as descendants of the Moondahs and Oroans that first cleared them, are bound, when called on, to bear the burdens imposed on them by the Rajah and his assigns ! ”

It is frankly admitted in the annals I quote from, that a difficulty arose regarding Funimatuk's birth, when he sought in marriage the daughter of the Sikurbhoom (or Pochete) Rajah. The Sikurbhoom family priest was sent to examine the certificates of birth, and found none ; but Rajah Matuck Roy prayed for the intercession of his *ophidian* parent. He had calmly contemplated his position, and put it to his father, that if the Sikurbhoom priest was not satisfied, a Moondah or an Oroan girl should become Queen of Nagpore. This was not to be thought of. So the nag once more entered an appearance, satisfied the Brahmin by a relation of wonders, and since then the Nagbunsis have always intermarried with the best Rajpoot families. It is particularly noted that at Funimatuk Roy's wedding-feast the Oroans and Moondahs all got drunk and began to fight, and the Rajah of Nagpore and Madurah had to obtain the assistance of his guests, the Rajah of Sirgoojah and the Dytya Rajah to separate them. The Dytya Rajah was, I presume, the Rajah of Patkoom, as that family bear the surname of Adytya to this day.

The marriage was celebrated at Satyomba, and there the first Rajah resided in a mud fort. The fourth in descent from Funimatuk moved his court to Chuttia, where we have the remains of a fort with masonry walls, and some stone temples ascribed to him. Subsequently Doisa was chosen as the seat of government, and here are some fine buildings, showing that the family were improving in art and in civilisation when they moved there. This site also has been abandoned, and the present Rajah lives in a very mean house at Palkote.

The sway of the Rajah of Chota-Nagpore does not, in early times, appear to have extended beyond the plateau or fringe of hills which divide it from the plains ; but the Moondahs overran those limits and formed colonies in what are now called the five pergunnahs—Silli, Tamar, Barundah, Rabey, and Boondoo—which did not acknowledge the Rajah-elect of Satyomba. In time, each of these pergunnahs elected a Rajah of its own, who (their descendants declare) were each of a divine or miraculous birth, like Funimatuk Roy ; and on the strength of it they all call themselves Chuttreys, and wear the cord. They intermarry amongst themselves, or with the petty Rajahs of Man-

bhoom, who are of similar origin ; so their claim to be Chuttrees, or, at all events, Hindoos of respectable caste, is not disputed. According to their own tradition, the Rajahs of the five pergunnahs first forfeited their independence by submitting to pay tribute to the Rajah of Cuttack. Eventually, however, they were subjugated by the Maharajah of Chota-Nagpore, and submitted to pay tribute to and accept the "Tilluck" or symbol of investiture from him. The Moondahs comprise about two-thirds of the population of the five pergunnahs, and all who are not Moondahs are settlers of no very ancient date.

In the northern and western parts of Chota-Nagpore, the authority of the old Moondah or Oraon chiefs has been almost effaced by the middlemen who have been introduced by the Zemindars, as more profitable farmers, or by the Brahmins, Rajpoots, and others to whom, for religious or secular services, grants have been made by the Maharajah and members of his family holding under him. In many instances the Kols have been entirely dispossessed of the lands their ancestors brought under cultivation, and ryots from other parts of India, more subservient to the wishes of the farmers, have been introduced. In some villages the peasant proprietary right of the aborigines has been entirely extinguished, and the few of that class that remain are found in the position of farm labourers.

In the southern parts of Chota-Nagpore, the Moondah chiefs, there as in Singbhoom called Mankees, have managed to retain their position, first, by resisting in open arms all attempts to encroach upon it, and lastly, by a settlement suggested and brought about by the officers of the British Government, and concluded with the Maharajah shortly after the Kol disturbances in A.D. 1833.

These Mankees have each under them about as many villages as formerly were included in a "Purha," and they pay a quit rent to the Maharajah as a commutation of the service and tribute in kind formerly paid to him as lord paramount ; and they collect this and a little more, as the contribution for their own support, from the heads of villages, who again collect according to ancient custom at fixed rates from the villagers. There is fixity of tenure throughout, from the Maharajah to the cultivator, notwithstanding the intervention of the Mankee, the village Moondah, or Mohto. This is no doubt a living exemplification of the relation that, in older times, subsisted between the cultivator of the soil and his chief in most parts of India.

In the Hoor Lurka Kols of Singbhoom we have a people who, till recently, had no notion of what it was to pay rent to any one, or even to give pecuniary support to their chiefs. They had their Mankees and Moondahs ; but no one exercised any

right arising from a title in the land except the cultivators. We have a very interesting description of the Hos, their country, and their languages, by Colonel Tickell,* and to this, before proceeding further with my memoir, I will add a brief sketch of their history.

The Singbhoom district is of a singular interest to the ethnologist. That portion of it called the Colehan, the Ho-desum or country proper of the Hos, is a series of fair and fertile plains, broken, divided, and surrounded by hills; about sixty miles in length from north to south, and from thirty-five to sixty in breadth from east to west. It has to the south and south-east the tributary estates, Mohurbun, Keonjur, Bonai, and Gangpore, inhabited by Ooriah-speaking Hindoos, to the east and north the Bengalee pergunnah of Dhulbhoom and district of Manbhoom, and north and north-east the Hindee district of Lohardaggah, and it is occupied by a race totally distinct by descent, custom, religion, and language from any of the three. A people on whose smiling country covetous eyes have often been directed, but into which no one ever attempted with impunity to intrude.

It is impossible to say when the Hos first entered Singbhoom; but as we find that the Chota-Nagpore Moondahs more and more assimilate to the Hos, as we approach Singbhoom from Chota-Nagpore, we may safely infer that the Hos came originally from that country; and this is their own tradition. They appear to have brought with them and retained their system of confederate government by Purhas; but in Singbhoom the word now used to express it, is Pirhi or Peer. Thus the Colehan is divided into Pirhis, each under a Mankee as chief of the Pirhi, and each village having its Moondah or headman.

According to their own tradition, the Hos displaced a nation of Jains† settled in the eastern parts of Singbhoom, some remains of whom are still extant, and a nation of Bhuyahs from the western and southern parts, driving them out of, and appropriating to their own exclusive use, the richest part of the country. From these early times, probably more than two thousand years ago, they have proudly held the country they acquired; and, in my humble opinion, they have the right to say they never submitted to rulers of an alien race, till they were forced to do so by the power of the British Empire.

At the commencement of the present century, Singbhoom

* Asiatic Soc. Journal, vol. ix, pp. 783, 997, 1063.

† The name of a Hindu religious sect, whose doctrines much resemble those of the Buddhists, who themselves no longer exist in Hindustan.—EDITOR.

was only known to the British Government as a country under the rule of certain Rajpoot chiefs, all of one family, whose independence, when we first occupied the Orissa Provinces, Lord Wellesley promised to respect. After the final cession of all the surrounding districts in 1819, these chiefs, occupying a territory that embraces the Colehan, voluntarily submitted to the British Government, and immediately sought the assistance of that Government in reducing the "Hos" to submission, asserting that the Hos were their subjects then in rebellion; but they admitted that for fifty years they had exercised no authority over them, and I find no proof that the Hos had at any former period ever submitted to them. It is not pretended that they were conquered; but supremacy was claimed by the Rajpoot Rajahs over the Ho tribes next to them, thus dividing the country and the people amongst four Rajpoot chiefs, the Rajahs of Mohurbhunj and Perahat, Koer of Seraikilla, and Thakoor of Khursowan.

It is true that the chiefs of Singbhoom, ancestors of the Rajahs of Porahut, Seraikilla and Thakoor of Khursowan, obtained great influence over their wild neighbours. They were gradually induced to believe tales which gave to the founder of this family a miraculous birth in their country, and they accorded to him divine honours, whilst they repudiated the idea of his being their temporal chief. The oldest surviving member of the Porahat family tells me that no regular tribute was ever received from the Colehan; but they were treated and employed rather as friendly allies than as subjects, and at certain seasons presents of trifling value were received from them, and presents given in return.

When a division of the estate of a Singbhoom chief occurred, the brothers each took, with the share assigned to him, a share in the goodwill of the Hos. Thus the Seraikilla and Khursowan families claimed the allegiance of the tribes nearest to them. The claim of the Mohurbhunj Rajah sprang up as the Kols extended their cultivation, till it touched or ran over his boundary. But it is admitted that all recorded attempts of the Rajpoot chiefs to subdue them had been signally defeated.

On the last occasion, the great grandfather of the present Maharajah of Chota-Nagpore, at the head of twenty thousand of his own men co-operating with the forces of the Singbhoom Rajpoot chiefs, entered the Colehan. The Hos allowed him to do this; they then fell on his army in masses, and, routing it with immense slaughter, ignominiously expelled him, pursuing him into his own territory, and severely retaliating on the border villages of the Maharajah and his allies.

It was no doubt in retaliation for these attacks on their inde-

pendence that the Hos now became, as they were found to be when first brought to our notice (in 1819-20), the scourge of the inhabitants of the more civilised parts of Singbhoom and of all the surrounding districts. They shewed no mercy to the Brahminical inhabitants of the villages which they attacked and pillaged. A long line of Brahmin villages on the Brahmin river in Gangpoor were laid waste by them, and have remained depopulated ever since. No traveller ever ventured to pass through their country. No Brahmin, Rajpoot, or other Hindoo caste, or Mussulman, was suffered to reside in it.

In 1820, the Agent Governor-General, Major Roughsedge, entered the Colehan at the head of a force consisting of a battalion of infantry, with cavalry and artillery. He was surprised to find the wild race, of whom he had heard such disparaging accounts, in possession of an open undulating and richly cultivated country, studded with villages in groves of magnificent tamarind and mango trees, abounding in unusual indications of rural wealth. He was allowed to enter on this scene unmolested; but the slaughter of some of his camp-followers, who had incautiously strayed into one of the villages, demonstrated the hostility of the people, and an attempt to capture the murderers brought about the first collision between the Hos and our troops. A party of cavalry, sent to the offending village, was met in the open field by three hundred warriors, who undauntedly advanced to meet the charge, rushed between the ranks of the horsemen, hacking especially at the horses with their formidable battle-axes, and showing no disposition to yield or to turn, till half their number had been sabred or shot. In the village where the murder was committed was found a reserve of sixty men, who fought desperately, and were all killed! The same evening another body of Lurkahs* attacked the rear of the column and cut off a convoy of supplies. It became necessary to act with vigour, and the old Hos of the present day describe the retaliation that now fell upon them as dreadfully severe. Eventually some intercepted mails were restored uninjured, as a token of submission, and the Lurka chiefs in the vicinity entered into engagements to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Rajah of Singbhoom.†

Major Roughsedge met with further opposition in his progress towards Sumbulpoor through the Southern Peers: he had in fact to fight his way out of the country; and on his leaving it a war broke out between the Kols who had submitted, and those who had not. One hundred Hindustanee

* "Laraka", the fighters, a common name for the Hos.

† Major Roughsedge's Despatches.

burkundazes, under a Soobadar, were sent by the Agent to the support of the Rajah and his Lurka allies, and this for a time gave them the advantage; but the Soobadar having been induced to enter the Colehan to assist in levying a contribution, was attacked, and he and the *whole of the party cut up!*

In 1821, a large force was employed to reduce the Lurkas to submission, and, after a month's hostilities, the leaders, encouraged by a proclamation, surrendered and entered into engagement, binding themselves to subjection to the British Government, and agreeing to pay to the chiefs at the rate of eight annas for each plough. It was now noticed that the Lurkas evinced a perfect willingness to be guided and ruled by British officers, and the utmost repugnance to the authority arrogated over them by the Singbhoom chiefs; and it would have saved much blood, expense, and trouble if this feeling had at the time been taken advantage of. Made over to the chiefs, they soon again became restive, and reverted to their old practices of resistance and pillage. The circle of depredations gradually increased, till it had included Dhulboom, devastated Bamunghatee, and extended to some parts of Chota-Nagpore. The chiefs under whom the Lurkas had been placed could not control them, and for some five years, from 1830 to 1836, the Hos maintained this hostile attitude.

In consequence of this unsatisfactory state of affairs, a proposal made by Captain Wilkinson in August, 1836, to employ a force and thoroughly subdue the Lurkas, and then to take the whole tribe under the direct management of British officers, was favourably received by Government, and promptly acted on. Two regiments of infantry and two brigades of guns entered Singbhoom in November, 1836, and operations were immediately commenced against the refractory Peers; and by February following all the Mankees and Moondahs had submitted, and bound themselves by fresh engagements to obey and pay revenue to the British Government, and no longer to follow the orders of the chiefs to whom they had previously been required to submit. Six hundred and twenty-two villages, with a population estimated at ninety thousand souls, of whom more than three-fourths are Hos, were thus brought and have since remained under the immediate control of the British Government. Since then, the population and spread of cultivation have immensely increased, and the people are now peaceful, prosperous, and happy. From the region round about the station, Chybassah, one hundred and seventy miles due west from Calcutta, the waste lands have entirely disappeared. Colonies of Hindus may now be found settled in the heart of the Colehan, occupying villages apart from the Hos, but with-

out demur placing themselves under the Ho Mankees of Peers. For their own system of government is, as far as possible, preserved, and the Mankees are officers of police as well as the tuhsildars or rent-collectors of their circles. One great change is now being peaceably introduced, the old system of assessment on ploughs is under process of commutation to a light assessment on the land.

This is, undoubtedly, the nucleus of the Moondah nation, the most compact, the purest, most powerful, and most interesting division of the whole race, and in appearance decidedly the best looking. In their erect carriage and fine manly bearing, the Hos look like a people that have maintained and are proud of their independence. Many have features of sufficiently good caste to entitle them to rank as Aryans; high noses, large but well formed mouths, beautiful teeth, and the facial angle as good as in the Hindu races. The figures both of male and female, freely displayed by the extreme scantiness of the national costume, are often models of beauty; but this description applies only to the people of the highly cultivated part of the country who have seldom been subjected to severe privation, and who generally fare right well. The inhabitants of the imperfectly reclaimed hill forests are more savage-looking; but they seldom deteriorate to the almost simian physiognomy that the Oraons are found with under similar circumstances. When the face of the Moondah varies from the Aryan or Caucasian type, it appears to me rather to merge into the Mongolian than the Negro. High cheek-bones, small openings for the eyes, having in some rare instances a tendency to the peculiar oblique set of the Mongolian, and flattish faces without much beard or whisker. They are of average stature, and in colour vary from brown to tawny yellow.

II.—THE ORAONS.

The Oraons have a tradition that they were once settled in Guzerat. They were expelled from that part of India, and retreating east, made a stand at fort Kalinjur, where they fought the “*Loorik Sowrik*” of “*Palipipri*,” were defeated, and, retreating still east, settled on the Rhotas Hills. Here, they say, they remained unmolested till attacked and driven from the hills by the Mahomedans in the reign of the emperor Akbar; but as they aver this occurred fifty-two generations ago, there is an anachronism somewhere. I think they were settled in Chota-Nagpore centuries before the days of Akbar; but it is probable that some of the clan remained in the Rhotas hills until the Mahomedans constructed their fortress there.

The accounts of ancient Guzerat faintly confirm the Oraon

tradition. I find from Thornton's Gazetteer that there is a race settled there from remote antiquity who are called Coolies ; but there is nothing in the name, which, as I observed before, appears to have been applied very generally to the aborigines by the Aryans, and the account given of the Coolies does not lead me to suppose they are of the Oraon family. There is, however, a short description of what appears to be a remnant of a tribe, which would answer perfectly for the Oraons,—“ A small, active, well-built race, engaged to some extent in cultivation, but by choice deriving their subsistence, as far as possible, from the chase, fishing, or the collecting of wild fruits and the marketable produce of the jungles for sale. Their peculiar pursuits, little relished or shared in by the rest of the community, caused them to be viewed with dislike and dread, and the reputation of possessing great powers in sorcery subjects them to much cruel treatment.”

Every word of the above description applies to the Oraon tribe, and the name given to this remnant of a people, viz., “Dunjas,” is an Oraon word not unlike the term Dhangurh, so commonly applied to the Oraons in the countries to which they emigrate for work.

The names traditionally handed down amongst the Oraons, as Loorik Sowrik, allude probably to some tribe of Sravacks or Sowoks or Jains, and the Palipipri might refer to the Palithana mountains, the Jain temples on which are amongst the most interesting architectural works in India. The etymology of the word Oraon, I have not been able to trace satisfactorily, but it may have been applied to the tribe in consequence of their migratory habits. They call themselves “Khoonkir.”

Between the language of the Oraons and the language of the Moondahs and their cognates, I can trace no similarity either in pronunciation, formation, construction, or general character. With pretty copious vocabularies before me, I can find no analogues, and, whilst the language of the Moondahs is soft and sonorous, that of the Oraons is guttural and harsh. Dr. Latham, in his descriptive ethnology, has noticed the near connection of the Oraon, Rájmahal hill, and Tamul languages, and especially observes on the similarity of the personal pronouns.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Rajmahal.</i>	<i>Oraon.</i>	<i>Tamul, etc.</i>
I	En	En	Nam, En
Thou	Nin	Nin	Nin
He, she, it	Ath	As	Ata
We	Nim	Em	Nam
Ye	Nina	Nim	Nim
They	Awar	Ar	Awar

Out of a vocabulary of about twenty-four Oraon and Tamul words, I find the following analogues.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Tamul.</i>	<i>Tuda.</i>	<i>Oraon.</i>
Man	Al	Al	Al
Eye	Kam	Kan	Khan
Tooth	Pal	Paroh	Pulla

But I find in the language now spoken by the Oraons, words of Sanscrit origin not in common use, as "*pupl*," flower, "*amb*," water, "*kesh*," hair, indicative of their having occupied some country in common with people speaking a Sanscrit or Prakrit dialect.

Their physical peculiarities are as different from those of the Moondah as are their linguistic characteristics. The Oraons must be regarded as a very small race, not short and squat like some of the Indo-Chinese stock, but a well-proportioned small race. The young men and women have light graceful figures, and are as active as monkeys. Their complexions are, as a rule, of the darkest; but if we take as our type those who dwell in mixed communities, we find great variety in feature and colour. If we take those who, living in isolated positions, may be supposed to offer us the purest blood, we find them generally dark and ill-favoured. They have wide mouths, thick lips and projecting maxillary processes, nostrils wide apart, and no elevation of nose to speak of, and low though not in general very receding foreheads. I have seen amongst them heads that in the woolly crispness of the hair completed the similitude of the Oraons to the Negro. It may be said that the class I am describing have degenerated in feature from living a wilder and more savage life than others of their clan; but I do not find this degeneracy of feature amongst the Jushpore Korewahs, who are to the Moondahs of Chota-Nagpore what the Jushpore Oraons are to the Oraons of the same district.* I found the Korewahs mostly short of stature, but with well knit muscular frames, complexion brown not black, sharp bright deep set eyes, noses not deficient in prominency, somewhat high cheek bones, but without notable maxillary protuberances. In the more civilised parts of the province, both Oraons and Moondahs improve in appearance. The former indeed still retain their somewhat diminutive appearance, but in complexion they are fairer, in features softer, some even good looking, and the youthful amongst them all pleasing from their usual happy contented expression and imperturbable good humour.

Driven from the Rhotas hills, the Oraons, according to their own tradition, separated into two great divisions. One of

* Asiatic Society's Journal, vol. xxxiv, p. 15.

these, moving east, found a final resting place in the Rájmahal hills; the other, going south, sought refuge in the Palamow hills, and wandered from valley to valley in those ranges, till they found themselves in Burway, a hill-locked estate in Chota-Nagpore proper. From thence they occupied the highlands of Jushpore and formed the settlements in the vicinity of Lohardugga, on the Chota-Nagpore plateau, where they still constitute the bulk of the population. The Satyomba Moondahs had not effected settlements so far to the west.

The identity of the language spoken by the Rájmahal hill people (not the Sonthals) and that of the Oraons is full and sufficient confirmation of the tradition of their common origin, and of the division of the tribe spoken of above; but a comparison of the customs of the Rájmahal hill people, who being isolated must have retained those they brought with them to the hills, with the customs of the Oraons, demonstrates that the latter are derived from the Moondahs.

Referring to Col. Walter Sherwill's account of the Rájmahal hill people,* I find, in regard to marriage, that it is customary for the young couple to sleep together on the same bed before marriage. The Oraons would consider this a very indecorous proceeding, though a public recognition that the young couple have slept together after the marriage is with the Oraons an important sequel to the ceremony. In the Rájmahal hills, says Col. Sherwill, the dead are buried. The Rig Veda and Ramayan tell us that this was the custom of the Dusyas, but the Moondahs and their cognates all burn their dead, and the Oraons follow their example.

The Rájmahal hill men swear on salt, the Oraons have a veneration for salt, but swear on *dub* grass,† *huldee*, and rice. The Oraons know nothing of Bedo Gosain, the invisible spirit adored by the Rájmahalies. Their supreme deity is the sun, under the title of Dhurmo, but as that and the Rájmahalee term are both of Sanscrit origin, it evinces that neither race have in their own language any word for the Deity.

Lastly, the hill man is described as less cheerful than the Sonthal, less industrious, and as not joining in the dances that the people of the Moondah stock are so devoted to. In Chota-Nagpore the Oraons are more lively than the Moondahs, quite as industrious, and the most enthusiastic and nimble-footed of the dancers.

The two races, Moondah and Oraon, must have been for ages the only colonists of the plateau; it is singular that they have no tradition of any dispute having arisen between them.

* Asiatic Society's Journal, vol. xx, p. 544.

† *Agrostis linearis*.

Affecting jealousy to guard against admixture of the races by sexual intercourse, they in other respects lived as one people, the Oraon conforming more to the customs of the Moondah than the Moondahs to those of the Oraon, and in many instances adopting the Moondah language and losing their own.

In villages east of Ranchee, though inhabited wholly by Oraons, the Moondah, not Oraon, is the language spoken; but the Moondah language is not much known in the vicinity of Lohardaggah or in Jushpore.

The village systems of the two people became almost identical in form. The village priest, called the Pahan, is probably an Oraon institution, as, I think, amongst the Moondahs the principle is that the head of the family is priest; but the Moondahs of Chota-Nagpore adopted it, and in their villages, as well as in those of the Oraons, there is always a Pahan. The village system now existing is such as it became after many encroachments by the Rajah and the middlemen introduced by him. Still, as bearing the impress of a very primitive form of government, it is worth describing, and in doing so, I shall make use of a very elaborate report on the subject written by Doctor Davidson in 1839.

The actual descendants of the men who formed the villages are called Bhuinhurs. They are a privileged class, who hold their lands at low fixed rates or rent-free, but they are bound to do service to the chief or his representative. The head of the Bhuinhurs is called the Moondah, and is generally the representative of the old Moondah chief of the village. He presides when meetings are held to settle disputes about social customs; and all demands for service on the Bhuinhurs by the proprietor or farmer are made through him. He holds his lands as Bhuinhurree, and has no other emolument.

The Mahto, though second in point of rank, is the most important functionary in the village. He has the assessment and settlement of all lands not held by the hereditary cultivators; collects all dues and rents, and is responsible for them to the farmer or proprietor. He holds for his services one *powa* of land rent-free, and in some villages gets a fee of one or two pice annually from each ryot. The office is not hereditary.

The Pahan is the village priest. He is a Moondah or Oraon by caste, but all observances for propitiating the village gods or devils are performed by him. No Brahmins are permitted to interfere. The office of Pahan is generally hereditary, but is not necessarily so. The Pahan has under his charge the land called "Dalikhatari," and from the proceeds of this land he has to support himself and to provide the rice and rice-beer required for the great festivals.

The Bhandari assists in the collection of rents, summoning ryots who have to do work, or whose attendance is required by the Zemindar or farmer, and in looking after the collections made in kind. He has an allowance of one *powa* of land, and gets from each ryot one *kerai* or bundle of each crop as it is cut.

There is a Gorait for each village, and a Kotewar for one or more villages. The former is the messenger of the zemindar or his representative, the latter is the police officer.

The villagers maintain a blacksmith and a gowala or herd: the latter takes care of all the village cattle, and is supposed to be responsible if any are stolen. They each get a maund of dhan for every plough, and three *kerais*, bundles, of other crops.

According to the tradition of the Kols, the rajah is entitled to the rent of only half of the land in each village. The remainder is bhuinhurree, or rent-free under some other denomination, but in most villages rent is now taken on from two-thirds to three-fourths of the land. The land is thus divided:—

i. Rughus—the land that pays rent to the owner or his representative.

ii. Bhetketta, a certain portion of the rughus which each ryot, not a bhuinhur, is allowed to cultivate free of rent, but for which he has to perform various services to the landlord or farmer.

iii. The land allotted to the Mahto, the Pahan, and the Bhundari.

iv. Munghus—the land at the disposal of the landlord or his agent, or the farmer of the village. For the cultivation of this land, the holder of the village can make any arrangement that he pleases.

v. Bhuinhurree is the land held rent free by the descendants of the founder of the village, who are, however, bound to render certain services to the rajah or his representative.

vi. Bhootketta—the land, the produce of which is appropriated to the expense of the great village poojas and festivals; a portion of this called “*dalikhatari*” is assigned to the pahan for the ordinary annual poojas, and the proceeds of the remainder are reserved for the triennial sacrifices and extraordinary occasions.

The rent is assessed on the irrigated land only. The cultivator is entitled to upland in proportion to the wet land for which he pays. If he cultivates more, the custom is for a payment in kind, called *muswur*, to be made when the crop is harvested.

The Bhuinhurs cling most tenaciously to their bhuinhurree lands. Insurrections have followed attempts to disturb these

tenures, and even now such attempts are sure to lead to serious affrays. The Kol insurrection of 1833 was, without doubt, mainly caused by the encroachments of alien farmers and sub-proprietors on the rights of the descendants of the old settlers. The first burst of the outbreak was a pretty broad hint, a general conflagration of the houses of alien farmers and sub-proprietors, and the massacre of all that the incensed Kols could find.

The Kols of Chota-Nagpore, generally a good-tempered, mild, inoffensive race, become wild with excitement on this question, and nothing can reconcile them to a decree or order which in any way infringes on what they consider their proprietary right. According to their theory, dispossession for generations can no more annul their right in the land than it can extinguish the ties of blood. The courts will not always accept this doctrine, and the Kols cannot regard as equitable any decision that excludes it.

An Oraon family lives very promiscuously in a small, indifferently constructed and untidy looking hut, and their village often consists of a street or court of such huts. In all that relates to their inner domestic life, they are less susceptible of improvement than the other tribes. They have no gardens or orchards attached to individual houses, but the groves of fruit-trees that they plant outside the village form a beautiful feature in the scenery of Chota-Nagpore, and they have generally, in and about the village, some fine trees which are common property. In every Oraon village of old standing there is a house called the "doomcooreea" (bachelor's hall), in which all unmarried men and boys of the tribe are obliged to sleep. Any one absenting himself and spending the night elsewhere in the village is fined. In this building the flags, musical instruments, yaks' tails, dancing equipments, and other property used at the festivals are kept. They have a regular system of fagging in the doomcooreea. The small boys have to shampoo the limbs of their luxurious masters, and obey all orders of the elders, who also systematically bully them to make them, it is alleged, hardy. In some villages the unmarried girls have a house to themselves, an old woman being appointed as duenna to look after them. She is always armed with a stick to keep the boys off. A circular space in front of the doomcooreea is kept clear as the village dancing ground. It is generally sheltered by fine old trees, and seats are placed all round for spectators or tired dancers.

The doomcooreea is never used by boys of the Moondah tribe. It is an institution quite unknown to the Hos, but the Moondahs and Hos build themselves houses in which all the family

can be decently accommodated. Their houses are more isolated, occupy much more space and are in appearance much more civilised than those of the Oraons, with verandahs, well raised plinths and separate apartments for the married and single members of the family. Every Moondah village has its dancing place, though it has no doomcooreea. The best Korewah villages consist of about forty houses built round a large square, in the centre of which is the dancing arena; but as the Korewahs are nomads, changing their abodes every second or third year, their villages may be regarded as mere standing camps. The Kheriahs build substantial comfortable houses like the Hos. It is curious they have the same word "O" for a house and the sky. The Moondah word "ora" is, like the Turkoman "ova," a house or tent. The flags kept in the Oraon doomcooreea appear to be an Oraon institution. Every village or group of villages, probably the head quarters of each "parha," has its peculiar flag, and we have actually had cases in courts praying for injunction against villages charged with having assumed flags that did not belong to them!

I will now proceed to review the customs of the Moondahs and Oraons together, taking care to note all points of divergence that are known to me.

After the birth of a child, the mother has to undergo purification, and on the same day that this ceremony takes place, which is simply a process of ablution, the child is named. Elderly females or matrons, friends and relations, assemble for this purpose, and a vessel containing water is placed in the midst, and, as the name first selected is pronounced, one of the women drops a grain of rice into the water. If the grain of rice sinks, that name is discarded, and the experiment is repeated with the second name on the list, and so on till, as the name is pronounced, the grain floats. (The Garrows of the eastern frontier have a similar method for divining the name of the spirit they ought to invoke on particular occasions.) If the name of some friend is chosen, it is considered as establishing a tie between the child and his namesake, resembling that which subsists between a Christian child and his godfather. The person whose name is selected is always called Saki or Sakhi, a word of Sanscrit origin meaning friend, so that in "nam Saki" we have in meaning and sound our word namesake. The following are some names of girls, Jambi, Jima, Jingi, Turki, Sulgi,* Pongla, Madhi, Makoo, Roomeea Saggi, Dinli, Natri, Akli, Bangi, Julli, and the Hindoo names of the

* A common name, and also the name of a goddess; and the name, I see, of one of the young ladies from the Andaman islands.

days of the week are very commonly given. The following are the names of boys—Rumsi, Birsā, Somra, Daharoo, Singra, Satri, Dubroo, Doolko, Didoo, Runka, Biggoo. But they have adopted many foreign names, and the names of British officers they have known and esteemed are thus preserved amongst the Hos of Singbhoom, and may be handed down from generation to generation. Thus “Major” and “Captain” have become common names in the Colehan, originally taken from Major Roughsedge, the first British officer they ever saw, and Captain Wilkinson (now Colonel Wilkinson), whom they regarded as their greatest benefactor. Doctor, Tickell, &c., are also common. Girls, when three or four years of age, receive their mark of caste: three lines tattooed on the forehead and two on each temple, four dots on the chin and one on the nose. It does not appear to be connected with any religious custom, nor is it applied with any ceremony; and as neither the Moondahs nor the Oraons have any particular term for it in their own language, it is probable that they adopted it from the Sudhs or Hindoos. Some Moondah girls of Chota-Nagpore have different marks. Those of Singbhoom have adopted the arrow, appropriately enough, as the national weapon of their lords and masters.

The Kheriahs and Juangas, though isolated from the Moondahs and Oraons, have the same triple and double marks on the forehead and temples. The Oraon boys are marked, when children, on the arms by rather a severe process of puncturation, which they consider it manly to endure. The only reason I have heard assigned for this custom is, that through it even the naked dead may have a distinguishing mark.

When a girl approaches maturity, it is incumbent on her to bind up her hair, and from that period of her life she is restricted to food prepared by her own people. As a child with her hair loose, she is permitted to partake of whatever is edible, no matter by whom prepared. Young men enjoy this liberty of appetite till they marry. They then, to use their own expression, put salt in their flesh, and must not partake of food prepared by aliens. The Oraons have a veneration for salt, and they are not absolutely prohibited from partaking of plain rice cooked by others, provided they are left to salt it themselves. The salt, it would appear, thus applied, removes the “taboo,” and makes *fas* what is otherwise *nefas*.

As a rule, marriages are not contracted till both the bride and bridegroom are of mature age. It is sometimes left to the parents to select wives for their sons; but the young people have ample opportunities for studying each other's characters, love-making, and following the bent of their own inclinations;

and it very often happens that plans concocted by the parents are frustrated by the children.

In Chota-Nagpore, amongst the agricultural classes, and in Singbhoom amongst all classes of Kols, the girls have all a price fixed upon them, and this the lover or his friends must arrange to pay, before the parents of the bride will give their consent. In Singbhoom, the price is so high, especially for young ladies of good family, that marriage is frequently put off till late in life; and girls valued not so much for their charms and accomplishments as for their pedigree, often grow grey as maidens in the house of their fathers. Singbhoom is perhaps the only place in India in which old maids are found; they have plenty of them there. But though urged to change this practice by all who take an interest in them, the old Mankees of Singbhoom are inflexible, not only in demanding a high price for their girls, but in insisting that it shall be paid, according to ancient custom, chiefly in cattle. A Mankee of the old school will not take less than forty head of cattle for his daughter; but the eyes of the rising generation are opened to the absurdity of the practice, and some of us may live to see it changed.

In consequence of this custom, the grown-up boys and girls are quite a separate institution in every Kol village; there is very little restraint on their intercourse, they form a very pleasant society of their own, from which the old people sensibly keep aloof. If a flirtation is known to have gone too far, the matter is generally settled by the young man being made to pay the price for the girl and marry her.

In Chota-Nagpore the daughter of a Mankee was, some years ago, valued at about 36 Rs.; but they are gradually adopting the custom of the Hindoos in regard to their marriages, and giving up the objectionable practice of putting a price on them. The price paid by the common people ranges from 10 to 12 rupees. These disagreeable preliminaries having been arranged, the bridegroom and a large party of his friends of both sexes enter with much singing and dancing and sham fighting in the village of the bride, where they meet the bride's party and are hospitably entertained.

The bride and bridegroom are now well anointed with turmeric, and bathed, and then taken and wedded, not to each other, but to two trees! The bride to a mowa tree, the bridegroom to a mango. They are made to touch the tree with "*seendoor*," (red lead), and then to clasp it in their arms. On returning, they are placed standing face to face, the girl on a curry stone over a ploughshare supported on sheaves of corn or grass. The bridegroom stands ungallantly treading on his

bride's toes, and in this position touches her forehead with the red lead ; she touches his forehead in the same manner. The bridesmaids then, after some preliminary splashing and sprinkling, pour a jar of water over the head of each : this necessitates a change of raiment, and apparently concludes the ceremony, as the young couple going inside to change, do not appear again till the cock-crowing announces the dawn or its approach. At the first crow the bridesmaids, who with the young men have been merrily keeping it up all night with the song and dance, burst into the nuptial chamber and bring forth the blushing bride and her bashful lord ; and then they all go down to the river or to a tank to bathe, and parties of boys and girls form sides under the leadership of the bride and bridegroom, and pelt each other with clods of earth. The bridegroom next takes a water vessel and conceals it in the stream or water for the bride to find. She then conceals it from him, and when he has found it, she takes it up filled with water and places it on her head. She lifts her arm to support the pitcher, and the bridegroom, standing behind her with his bow strung, and the hand that grasps it lightly resting on her shoulder, discharges an arrow from the pretty loophole thus formed into the path before her. The girl walks on to where the arrow falls, and with head erect and still bearing the pitcher of water, she picks it up with her foot, takes it into her hand, and restores it to her husband with a graceful obeisance. She thus shows that she can adroitly perform her domestic duties and knows her duty to her lord and master, whilst he, on his part, in discharging an arrow to clear her path of an imaginary foe, indicates that he is prepared to perform his duty as her guide and protector through life.

In the Oraon marriages, many of these symbolical ceremonies are omitted, and the important one of exchanging the "*sin-door*" is differently performed. The bridegroom stands behind his bride with his toes on her heels, and stretches over her head to touch her forehead with the powder. She touches his forehead by reaching back over his shoulder. The cold bath completes the ceremony, they go to their own apartment to change their clothes, and do not emerge till morning.

The price paid for a girl in cows is called "*sukmur*" by the Kheriah tribe. They have no word for marriage in their own language, and the only ceremony used appears to be little more than a sort of public recognition of the cohabitation. They have learned to call this "*biha*," but they admitted to me that this public recognition was often dispensed with.

It takes place in this wise. After the settlement of the usual preliminaries, the bride is brought to the village of her intended

bridegroom by her own people and their friends, and they halt and bivouac in the village grove. The bridegroom and his friends join them in the grove, where they all regale themselves and dance, and during these nuptial dances the bride and bridegroom are each borne on the hips of one of their dancing friends; they are not allowed to put their feet to the ground. Thus wildly dancing, they proceed into the village, and the bride and bridegroom are taken to the latter's house and anointed with oil; they are then brought outside, and the ceremony of touching each other's forehead with the "*sindoor*" is performed, followed by the splashing and sousing, which becomes a general romp. Then the young couple are left to themselves till morning. The bridesmaids arouse them as the cock crows, and, after the public ablution of garments and their wearers, the party breaks up.

The gestures of the dancers on these occasions, and the songs, all bear more directly than delicately on what is evidently considered as the main object of the festivities.

In Singbhoom, marriages, notwithstanding the lateness at which they take place, are generally arranged by the parents, but their wishes are not unfrequently anticipated by love matches. In the various journeyings to and fro that are found necessary when a match is being arranged, omens are carefully observed, and the match is broken off if they are unfavourable. At the actual marriage there is much feasting and dancing, but little ceremony. The turning point of the affair is, when the bride and bridegroom mix and drink off some of the beer they have each been helped to; the boy pours some of the beer given to him into the girl's cup, she pours from her cup into the boy's cup, and they drink and thus become of the same "*keeli*" or clan, for the Hos, Moondahs, and Oraons are all divided into families under this name, and may not take to wife a girl of their own *keeli*.

This division of the primitive races into something having a semblance to caste, will be found in the north-eastern frontier as well as in this province. The Garrows, for instance, are divided into what are called "*maharis*," and a man may not marry a girl of his own mahari.

It is obvious that the custom does not spring from any such notions of caste as are found amongst the Hindoos, and that it is not one which these races have adopted from the Hindoos, because with a Hindoo, caste is destroyed by a marriage *out* of it. It is equally opposed to the custom of the Jews, whose daughters (at least if heiresses) were obliged to take husbands of their own tribe.*

* Numbers xxxvi, 6.

In Singbhoom the bride and bridegroom do not touch each other with "*sindoor*," as is the custom in Chota-Nagpore. The Oraons and Moondahs may have adopted the custom from the Hindoos, and the primitive practice of the race is probably as it is found amongst the more isolated Hos.

A very singular scene may sometimes be noticed in the markets of Singbhoom. A young man suddenly makes a pounce on a girl and carries her off bodily, his friends covering the retreat (like a group from the picture of the rape of the Sabines). This is generally a summary method of surmounting the obstacles that cruel parents may have placed in the lovers' path; but though it is sometimes done in anticipation of the favourable inclination of the girl herself, and in spite of her struggles and tears, no disinterested person interferes, and the girls, late companions of the abducted maiden, often applaud the exploit.

The Ho husband has to pay a high price for his wife, and it is certain that he highly appreciates her. Although he is not known to have for her any more endearing epithet than "my old woman," yet by no civilised race are wives treated with more consideration than by the untutored Ho. The whole of the domestic arrangements are under her exclusive management. She is consulted on all occasions, and I know one or two husbands whom I am almost inclined to regard as henpecked. The Kols seldom take a second wife during the lifetime of the first, but I know instances of their having done so. The wife always cooks for her husband, and when the dinner is ready, they sit down and eat it together like Christians; but the Oraons have followed the Hindoo custom of making the woman eat the leavings of her lord.

It is customary with all these tribes to pay particular attention to omens, when any of them set out to arrange the preliminaries of a marriage. The Hos, who are more under the influence of this superstition than their cognates or than the Oraons, have a long list of deterrent signs, which have been described by Tickell in his paper above quoted. I subjoin the most noticeable of those that are observed by the Oraons.

I. On leaving the house "to win a bride," they look out for omens. If a cow calls and the calf responds, it is good. If there is no response, the wooing is postponed or abandoned.

II. If they find a dead mouse on the road, they must stop and make a diagnosis. If ants and flies have possessed themselves of the carcass, it is good, they go on. If the insects appear to have shunned it (which is not very likely to happen), they go back.

III. It is not good to meet oxen or buffaloes with their horns

crossed, or to see a hawk strike a bird, or to come upon women washing clothes. It is good to see people burying a dead body, and to find on their road a cow giving milk to her calf.

iv. If they see a man cutting a tree, and the tree falls before they can get past it, it is very bad. If they pass before it falls, it is all right. A certain bird heard on the left gives a note of joy; if heard on the right, he is a harbinger of woe.

v. If, on approaching the village of the girl, they come on women with water-pots full, it is a happy omen. If they meet a party with empty water-pots, it is a bad one.

The Nagpore Kols, whether of the Moondah or Oraon tribe, and all the cognates of the Moondahs that I know of, are passionately fond of dancing, and with them dancing is as much an accomplishment as it is with the civilised nations of Europe. They have a great variety of dances, and in each different steps and figures are used, of great intricacy, but they are performed with a neatness and precision that can only be acquired by great practice. Little children are hardly on their legs before they begin to learn their dancing steps; and the result of this early training is that, however difficult the step, the limbs of the performers move as if they belonged to one body. They have musical voices and a great variety of simple melodies. It is a fact that, when we raised a corps of Kols, their early practice in keeping step and time greatly facilitated the operations of drill; and the missionaries have availed themselves of the musical talents and taste of the Kol converts to produce congregational singing that would be a credit to an English country church.

The dances are seen to the greatest advantage at the great periodical festivals called "jstras." They are at appointed places and seasons, and, when the day comes, all take a holiday and proceed to the spot in their best array. The girls on these occasions put on their best dress, generally a white "saree," with a broad red border. They tastefully arrange flowers in their hair and plumes of the long breast feathers of the paddy-bird. The young men wear Turkey red turbans, and add a snow white cloth to their usually scanty garb, and also adorn themselves with flowers and peacock's feathers. As parties from the different villages come near the trysting place, they may be observed finishing their toilettes in the open fields; when all is ready, the groups form, and their approach from different sides, with their banners and yak's tails waving, horns and symbols sounding, marshalled into alternate ranks of lads and lasses all keeping perfect step and dress, with the gay head-dresses of the girls and the numerous brass ornaments of the boys glittering in the sun, forms a very lively and pleasing pic-

ture. They enter the grove where the meeting is held in jaunty dashing style, wheeling and countermarching and forming lines, circles, and columns with grace and precision. The dance with these movements is called “khurriah,” and they are held in all months of the year, a series of them following each other at short intervals at different places all over the country, and the attendance, at some that I have seen, could not be under 5,000 people, all enjoying themselves.

When they enter the grove, the different groups join and dance the khurriah together, forming one vast dancing procession. Then each takes its own place and plants its flag and dances round it till near sunset, when all go dancing home. This is followed by a carouse in the village, after which the dance is often continued at the “*akrah*” all night.

At each of these “jattras,” a kind of fair is held, and fairings and refreshments are to be had in abundance. The young men can treat their partners with sweetmeats, and do so. As already observed, there is a place in every village called “*akrah*” set apart for dancing and ceremonies. This is a circular arena with a post in the centre, and around it are benches for the spectators or for the dancers when wearied, the whole being generally shaded by fine old tamarind, the most beautiful of village trees.

The season dances in the village open with the *kurrum* in July, at the commencement of the planting season. There is a movement in this dance called “*hojar*,” when the girls suddenly kneel and pat the ground in time to the music, as if caressing and coaxing it to be productive. On the day appointed for the ceremony, the boys and girls go in procession to the *kurrum* tree, cut and bring back to the village some branches, which are planted in the *akrah*. An old man with a liberal allowance of beer is placed to watch these, whilst the young people refresh themselves. They all, old and young, then assemble in the *akrah*, and one of the elders harangues them, and after giving them much good advice, concludes by directing them to commence the dance. The songs sung on this occasion are in Hindee, and contain allusions to the flooded state of the rivers and fields. They also sing an ode to the Satyomba rajah. The *kurrum* is kept by the Soodh or Hindoo population as well as by the Kols.

After harvest of the earlier crop of the planted rice, in November, the “*matha*” is danced by the boys and girls in the village. The girls, moving in a semicircle and clasping each other’s hands, dance with a very lively step and bowing motion of the body to the men who sing and play to them. The girls have another dance at this season called “*angua*,” because it is

danced in front of the house instead of the *akrah*; to this and to a feast held on the occasion the young men are not invited.

The “jadoor” dances commence on the completion of the great harvest of the rice crop, and continue till the commencement of the hot season. This is one of the most characteristic dances, from the peculiar way in which the arms are interwoven and clasped behind the back of the performers.

Then comes the “sarhool,” at the close of the month of Phalgun, or early in March. The sarhool is the flower of the saul tree, which now blossoms. The boys and girls make garlands of these flowers, weave them in their hair and decorate their houses with them. The dance on this occasion, called the “Bāihini,” is a very frisky one. The boys and girls dance to each other, clasping hands and pirouetting, so as to cause “*dos-à-dos*” concussions which appear to constitute the best part of the fun. Yet the subject of the song sung at the Sarhool feast is a sad one. A girl who had married out of the village is supposed to return to it in affliction, and to sit weeping at one side of the house, whilst her former associates are revelling at the other. The songs are in the Moondah language.

They have besides different dances for weddings, and a dance called “jumhir” which is suited to any occasion. The dances above briefly noticed are all more or less connected with some religious ceremony, but this is left to the elders. The young people seem to me to take little interest in that part of the festival, which is, in proportion to the dancing, in importance like the bread to Falstaff’s sack. They are always ready for a dance, and night after night in some villages the *akrah* drums collect the youths and maidens after the evening meal, and if you go quietly to the scene, as I have done, you may find that, whilst some are dancing, others are flirting in the most demonstrative manner, seated in detached couples on the benches or on the roots of the great trees, with arms round each others’ waists, looking lovingly into each others’ faces.

Next to dancing, that which most engrosses the mind of the Kol is the belief in and fear of witchcraft. All disease in men and in cattle is attributed to one or two causes, the wrath of some evil spirit who has to be appeased, or the spell of some witch or sorcerer who should be destroyed. The fear of punishment and, I may add for some of them, the respect they bear to the orders of their rulers, restrain their hands, and witch murders are now very rare, but a village is soon made too hot to hold one who is supposed to be a witch.

When a belief is entertained that sickness in a family, or mortality amongst cattle, or other misfortune, has been brought

about by sorcery, a sokha or witch-finder is employed to find out who has cast the spell. By the sokhas various methods of divination are employed. One of the most common is the test by the stone and "*poila*." The latter is a large wooden cup shaped like a half cocoanut, used as a measure for grain. It is placed under a flat stone, and becomes a pivot for the stone to turn on. A boy is then placed in a sitting position on the stone, supporting himself by his hands, and the names of all the people in the neighbourhood are slowly pronounced, and as each name is uttered, a few grains of rice are thrown at the boy; when they come to the name of the witch or wizard, the stone turns and the boy rolls off!

There is no necessary collusion between the sokha and the boy; the motion of the hand throwing the rice produces *coma*, and the sokha is, I suppose, sufficiently a mesmerist to bring about the required result when he pleases.

The Singbhoom Kols or Hos, left to themselves, not only considered it necessary to put to death a witch thus denounced, but if she had children or other blood relations, they must all perish, as all of the same blood were supposed to be tainted.

In 1857, when, in consequence of the mutinies, Singbhoom was temporarily without officers, the Ho tribes of the southern parts of the district, always the most turbulent, released from a restraint they had never been very patient under, set to work to search out the witches and sorcerers who, it was supposed, from the long spell of protection they had enjoyed, had increased and multiplied to a dangerous extent. In a report on this subject from the district officer, in 1860, it is stated that "the destruction of human life that ensued is too terrible to contemplate; whole families were put an end to. In some instances the destroyers, issuing forth in the dusk and commencing with the denounced wizard and his household, went from house to house, until before the morning dawn they had succeeded in extinguishing, as they supposed, the whole race." On the suppression of the disturbances, the return of the refractory Hos to order was as sudden and decisive as had been their relapse into barbarism. The survivors of the families who had suffered at once emerged with confidence from their hiding-places, and of the cases of witchcraft-murder, thus or otherwise brought to notice, the perpetrators were in almost every instance prosecuted to conviction.

It was melancholy to have to condemn men who themselves artlessly detailed every incident of the crime with which they were charged. The work of retribution was a sad task, but it was rigorously carried out, and we have not since then had a single case of witchcraft murder in the Colehan. That the be-

lief in the existence of witches and sorcerers is consequently extirpated, cannot be hoped. Nothing but their conversion from paganism could effect this. I am convinced that in most instances the prisoners, who in their examinations detailed the most marvellous effects of imputed sorcery, were sincere believers in all that they narrated.

One of them, named Mora, saw his wife killed by a tiger, which he followed till it led him to the house of a man named Poosa, whom he knew. He told Poosa's relations what had occurred, declaring to them that Poosa had, in the form of a tiger, killed and eaten his wife. The relatives appealed to, did not for a moment discredit the charge. They said they were aware that Poosa did possess the imputed power of metamorphosis. They brought him out and, delivering him bound to his accuser, stood by whilst Mora deliberately put him to death.

In explanation of their having so acted, they deposed that Poosa had one night devoured an entire goat and roared like a tiger, whilst he was eating it; and on another occasion he informed his friends he had a longing to eat a particular bullock, and that very night that very bullock was killed and devoured by a tiger!

From their having lived so long together, it is not surprising that we should find the religious ceremonies of the Oraon and Moondah almost identical. The Oraons have adopted the religion of the Moondah, but they retain some features of their original faith, which indicate that it was in many essential points different from that to which they have conformed.

I have already observed that the pahan or village priest is in all probability an Oraon institution. The Rajmahali have a similar functionary called "demam," who foretells events, offers sacrifices, regulates feasts, and exorcises devils. In the Ho and Moondah villages, all priestly functions may be performed by the head of the family, or, if the occasion be one in which the village generally is concerned, by any elder of the requisite knowledge and experience. They worship the sun, "Sing-bonga," as the supreme being, the creator, the preserver; and a number of secondary gods, invisible; material idol worship they have none. The paganism of the Ho and Moondah in all essential features is shamanistic.

The Oraons, in addition to the Pahan, whose business it is to offer sacrifices for the benefit of the community, have recourse to a person called "Ojha" whom they consult regarding the proper spirit to be invoked and the nature of the sacrifice that is required of them, and whose functions appear to me to bear a strong resemblance to those of the medicine man of the

African tribes. The Oraons have wooden images or stones to represent the village and domestic spirits they worship. Thus a carved post in the centre of their dancing arena represents the tutelary deity of the village, "Daroo;" and they have objects of some kind to represent their domestic gods, *penates*.

They never build a house, or select a new site for a village or even a new threshing-floor, without consulting the ojha and omens. When a new house is ready for the reception of its owners, an ojha is called, and he takes earth from the hearth and charcoal, and, mixing them together, marks on the floor a magic circle. In the centre of this he places an egg, and on the egg a split twig of the Bel tree. The egg is then roasted and eaten by the people who are to occupy the house. This is followed by a great feast and dancing—a regular house-warming: on the top of the house an image of a fish is hung to avert the evil eye. These peculiarities in the paganism of the Oraon, and only practised by Moondahs who live in the same village with them, appear to me to savour thoroughly of feticism. Before affirming this positively, it would be advisable to examine more minutely the customs of the Rajmahal hill tribes; but the elephant gods, depicted by W. Sherwill as seen in their villages, are very fetish in appearance.*

The Moondahs, without applying to an ojha or medicine-man, consult auguries in choosing the site of a house, with prayer to Singbonga. A small quantity of rice is placed in holes made at the four corners of the selected site, where it is left all night, and if found undisturbed in the morning, the site is good. The same process is gone through in selecting a new site for a village. Prayer is offered to Singbonga twice,—first, that the test applied may truly indicate if the site be good or bad; secondly, for a blessing on the chosen site.

It is the fashion to call the religion of the Kols 'devil worship,' but this is not strictly correct; for although the minor deities may be mostly of a malevolent nature, and therefore devils who have to be propitiated, still Singbonga is worshipped as a beneficent god. This worship of the sun as the supreme deity is the foundation of the religion of the Oraons as well as of the Moondahs. By the former he is invoked as Dhurmi, the holy one. He is the creator and the preserver, and with reference to his purity, white animals are offered to him by his votaries. He is not regarded as the author of sickness or calamity; but he may be appealed to to avert it, and this appeal is often made, when the sacrifices to the minor deities have been unproductive.

* Vide Journal Asiatic Society, Bengal, No. vii, 1851, p. 553.
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But, besides these occasional sacrifices, all Moondahs who hold to the faith of their ancestors, are especially bound to make a certain number of offerings to Singbonga during their tenure of the position of head of the family. He may take his own time about them, but he will not be happy in his mind till he completes his complement and clears the account. I obtained this information from the Kheriahs, and on speaking about it to some ancient Pahans and Moondah elders, was told that it undoubtedly is the orthodox practice, but it has been neglected. The sacrifices are five in number: first, fowls; second, a pig; third, a white goat; fourth, a ram; fifth, a buffalo; and they must be offered in the open plain in front of an ant hill, or with an ant hill as an altar. Sacrifices to other gods are generally offered in the "Saerna,"* the sacred grove of Sal trees, the remnant of the primeval forest left for the spirits when the settlement was first made.

The names and attributes of the inferior deities are nearly the same amongst the Hos in Singbhoom, the Moondahs and Oraons in Chota-Nagpore, and amongst the Sonthals *passim*. Marang Booroo and Pongla his wife; Desaoilli, Jaer Boori, Eekin Bonga, Boora Bonga, Charee Desoilli and Dara are invoked in Chota-Nagpore.

The Sonthals have Marang Booroo, also Maniko his brother and Jaer his sister. According to Tickell's account of the Singbhoom gods and their attributes, they too have Marang Booroo and Pongala, Desaoilli and Jaer Boori or Jaer Era, and others. In cases of sickness the Ho, after ascertaining by augury which of the gods should be propitiated, will go on offering sacrifices till the patient recovers, or his live stock is entirely exhausted.

Next to Singbonga, I am inclined to place the deity that is adored as "Marang Booroo." Booroo means mountain, but every mountain has its spirit, and the word is therefore used to mean god or spirit† also. Marang Booroo is the great spirit or great mountain. Not far from the village of Lodmah in Chota-Nagpore, one of the most conspicuous hills on the plateau is called Marang Booroo, and here the great spirit is supposed to dwell. It is worshipped by the Sonthals, the Bhoomij, the Hos, the Moondahs, and the Oraons. The two latter make pilgrimages to it. The Hos have some vague notion of its situation; the more distant members of the family canonise some hill more conveniently situated.

* Or 'Saran', 'Charan'.

† Thus they have for their altars groves and high places, like the idolatrous Jews.

The Marang Booroo is especially venerated as the lord of rain. Before the rains the women go to the top of the hill, under the leadership of the wives of the Pahans, with drums, which are on this occasion only played on by young ladies, and with offerings of milk and leaves of the Bel tree. On the top of the hill there is a flat mass of rock on which they deposit their offerings.

The wives of the Pahans now kneel down, and with hair loosened invoke the deity, beseeching him to give their crops seasonable rain. They shake their heads violently as they reiterate this prayer, till they work themselves into a phrensy, and the movement becomes involuntary. They go on thus wildly gesticulating, till a "little cloud like a man's hand" is seen. Then they arise, take up the drums, and dance the Kurrun on the rock, till Marang Booroo's response to their prayer is heard in the distant rumbling of thunder, and they go home rejoicing. They must go "fasting to the mount," and stay there till "there is a sound of abundance of rain," when they get them down to eat and drink. My informant tells me it always comes before evening. We must conclude that the old women are wonderfully clever at taking a "forecast," and do not commence the fast till they sniff the rain.

All the villagers living in the vicinity of the hill make offerings of goats, whenever they think it desirable to propitiate this spirit; but he is not invoked in cases of sickness, unless the ojha declares it necessary. Sometimes bullocks are offered.

The next in importance in Chota-Nagpore appears to be the spirit Dara, whom the Oraons and Moondahs living with them adore in the form of a carved post stuck up where the great *jatras* are held, or in the village dancing place. Dara appears to be a god of rather bacchanalian characteristics, worshipped amidst much revelling and wassail. A sacrifice to him of fowls is followed by a feast in his honour, at which all the elders drink themselves into a state of sottish drunkenness, whilst the young people dance and make love; and next day comes the *jatra* which all the country attend.

The penates are generally called "old folks." They are in fact the *manes* of the votaries' ancestors; votive offerings are made to them when their descendants go on a journey, and they are generally the first that are propitiated when there is sickness in the family. By the Singbhoom Kols, the *manes* of the ancestors of the principal lady of the house are also honoured. The offerings to them are made on the path by which she was brought home as a bride. Desaoilli and Jaeroilli are propitiated for harvests and for cattle, Chandoo Seekur, the same probably as the Chanala of the Hos, for children.

The Pahan has to solemnise regularly the following festivals. The Hurihur, at the commencement of the planting season. Every one then plants a branch of the Belowa in his field, and each contributes a fowl, a pitcher of beer, and a handful of rice to the feast. The sacrifice is offered to Desaoolli, Jaer Boori, and others, in the Saerna.

During the Sarhool—when the Sal tree blossoms—the sacrifice of a goat and fowls is offered in the Saerna by the Pahan to the *manes* of the founders of the village and to Dara. The introduction of the Sal blossom, in memory of the forest that was cleared when the village was formed, is very appropriate. At the khurria Poojah when the rice is harvested, the sacrifice is offered and the feast takes place on the Pahan's threshing floor.

Dalikattari: every second year a fowl, every third year a ram, every fourth year a buffalo. To provide what is required for this last, the Pahan holds the Dalikattaree land.

I have already alluded to the division of the Moondahs and their cognates into "Keelles" or clans. Many of the Oraon clans and some of the Moondah in Chota-Nagpore are called after animals, and they must not kill or eat what they are named after.

Thus the Moondah "Enidhi" and Oraon "Minjrar" or Eel tribe will not kill or eat that fish. The Hawk, Crow, Heron tribes will not kill or eat those birds. Livingstone, quoted in Latham,* tells us that the sub-tribes of the Bitshaunas (or Bechuanas) are similarly named after certain animals, and a tribe never eats the animal from which it is named, using the term, "*ila*," hate or dread, in reference to killing it.

The above curious coincidence tempts me to give a few more details regarding the Oraon clans.

The "Tirki"—have an objection to animals whose eyes are not yet open, and their own offspring are never shewn till they are wide awake.

The "Ekkr"—will not touch the head of a tortoise.

The "Katchoor"—object to water in which an elephant has been bathed."

The "Amdiar"—will not eat the foam of the river.

The "Kujrar"—will not eat the oil of the Kujri tree, or sit in its shade.

The "Tiga"—will not eat the monkey.

The Ho chiefs could give me no signification for the names in which their families rejoice. The following are the most aristocratic, the Boorooilli, the Porthi, Sincoi, Baipoi, Soondee, Bandri.

I do not know of any people who are more careful in regard

* Latham's "Ethnology", vol. ii, p. 160.

to the disposal of their dead than are the tribes of whom I am treating, especially the Singbhoom Kols and best classes of the Moondahs.

On the death of a Ho or Moondah, a very substantial coffin is constructed and placed on faggots of firewood. The body, carefully washed and anointed with oil and turmeric, is reverently laid in the coffin, and all the clothes and ornaments used by the deceased are placed with it, and also any money that he had about him when he died. Then the lid of the coffin is put on, and faggots piled above and around it, and the whole is burned. The cremation takes place in front of the deceased's house. Next morning, water is thrown on the ashes, and search made for the bones; all the larger fragments are carefully preserved, the remainder, with the ashes, are buried then and there. The selected bones are placed in a vessel and hung up in the house in a place where they may be continually viewed by the widow or mother. Thus they remain till the very extensive arrangements necessary for the final disposal are effected. A large monumental stone has to be selected, and it is sometimes so large that the men of several villages are employed to move it. It is brought to the family burial place, which with the Hos is close to their houses, and with the Oraons generally separated from the village by a stream. A deep round hole is dug beside the stone, and, when all is ready, a procession is formed, consisting of one old woman carrying the bones on a decorated bamboo tray, one or two men with deep-sounding wooden drums, and half-a-dozen young girls, those in the front rank carrying empty and partly-broken pitchers, and brass vessels. The procession moves with a solemn ghostly sliding step, in time to the deep-sounding drum. The old woman carries the tray on her head, but at regular intervals she slowly lowers it, and as she does so, the girls gently lower and mournfully reverse the pitchers and brass vessels, to shew that they are empty.

In this manner the remains are taken to the house of every friend and relative of the deceased, within a circle of a few miles, and to every house in the village; and, as it approaches, the inmates come out and mourn, as they call to mind all the good qualities of the deceased. The bones are thus conveyed to all his favourite haunts, to the fields he cultivated, to the grove he planted, to the threshing-floor where he worked, and to the *akrah* where he made merry. When this part of the ceremony is completed, the procession returns to the village, and moves in circles round the grave, gradually approaching its goal; at last it stops, and a quantity of rice and other food, cooked and uncooked, is now cast into the hole. The bones are then put into a new earthen vessel and deposited on the

rice, and the hole is filled in and covered with the large slab which effectually closes it against desecration.

The collection of these massive grave stones under the fine old tamarind trees is a remarkable feature in Kol villages, and almost an indelible one, for they are found in many places where Kols have not existed for centuries. Besides the grave stones, monumental stones are set up outside the village to the memory of men of note. They are fixed in an earthen plinth, on which, shaded by the pillar, the ghost is supposed to sit. The Kheriahs have collections of these monuments in the little enclosure round their houses, and offerings and libations are constantly made to them.

The funeral ceremonies above described are of a composite order, mingling, with the Hindoo custom of cremation, what was in all probability their original mode of burial; but a very profound reverence for the dead pervades them all. I think it is very probable that the Kols originally disposed of their dead differently. The coffin, though put together on the faggots that are to consume it, has projections as if to facilitate transport. Omit the burning and substitute burial, and we have the careful disposal and subsequent adoration of the dead that is practised by the Chinese; but the burning of the body and the long retention of the ashes in a portable form may have been adopted at a time when the tribe could not be certain of continued residence in one place.

Tickell has given at length the Ho legend of the origin of the human race. It is supremely absurd, and very few of the present generation know anything or care anything about it. I have always found such legends changeable and untrustworthy. With no written record to give them permanence, they are altered to suit either new conditions or the fancy of the reciter. Thus, though the Kols have known the English for little more than half a century, they assign to them a most honourable place in their genesis. The Assam Abors and Garrows do just the same.

I do not think that the present generation of Kols have any notion of a heaven or a hell that may not be traced to Brahminical or Christian teaching. The old idea is that the souls of the dead become "*bhoots*," spirits, but no thought of reward or punishment is connected with the change. When a Ho swears, the oath has no reference whatever to a future state. He prays, that if he speak not the truth he may be afflicted in this world with the loss of all—health, wealth, wife, children; that he may sow without reaping, and finally may be devoured by a tiger; but he swears not by any hope of happiness beyond the grave. He has in his primitive state no such hope, and I believe that most Indian aborigines, though they may have

some vague ideas of continuous existence, will be found equally devoid of original notions in regard to the judgment to come.

It may be said that the funeral ceremonies I have described indicate clearly a belief in resurrection, else why should food, clothes, and money, be burned with the body or buried with the ashes? The Kols have given me the same explanation of this that I once before received from the Chulikutta Mishmees in Upper Assam, who have no notion of any existence beyond the grave. They do not wish to benefit by the loss of their friend, which they would do if they were to appropriate any article belonging to him; they, therefore, give with him all his personalities, all property that he and he alone used and benefited by; but this does not apply to the stock of the farm and household property that all profit by, or even to new cloth, for that might have been procured for any member of the family. It often happens that a respectable "Ho" has goods of this nature, that he abstains from using even once, because, if once used, the article will be destroyed at his death.

The Moondah-Oraon races are passionately fond of field sports, and are so successful that large and small game soon disappear from the vicinity of considerable settlements; and they fear not to make a new settlement, consisting only of a few huts, in the jungles most infested by wild beasts. Every year, at the commencement of the hot season, they form great hunting parties, which are well described in Tickell's memoir. They are also greatly addicted to cock-fighting. They have periodical meets at assigned places where hundreds of fighting cocks are collected. Cruel steel spurs are used, and the combat is always *à l'outrance*, the victims becoming the property of the owners of the victorious birds. This is, I think, the only stake. They are fond of fishing too, and some of them are very expert in spearing large fish.

The arms of the Kols are to this day what they were in the days of "*Rama*"—the bow and arrow and battle-axe. The bow is simply a piece of bamboo, and the string is of the same material. The war arrows have large broad blades doubly and trebly barbed, but they make them of all shapes; poison they do not use. They commence practice with the bow and arrow at the earliest age. In Singbhoom boys three and four years old and upwards, when herding cattle or otherwise engaged, have always their bow, and blunt and sharp arrows; the former for practice, the latter to bring down birds when they have a chance.

In the villages of Chota-Nagpore where the Oraon and Moondah are mixed up together, the difference of character between the two races is not much marked; but if we compare the Singbhoom Hos or Chota-Nagpore Mankees and the

Oraons, we see strong contrasts. The Oraon has the lively happy disposition of the Negro. He is fond of gaiety, decorating rather than clothing his person, and whether toiling or playing, is always cheerful.

The Ho or Moondah has more the dignity and reserve of the North American Indian, at least when he is sober. He appears to less advantage when he is drunk, and he is not unfrequently in that state. At all festivals and ceremonies, deep potations of the rice-beer called "*eeley*" are freely indulged in by both sexes. Inspired by this beverage, the young men and girls dance together all day and half the night; but the dances are perfectly correct, and whenever these meetings have led to improprieties, it is always attributed to a too free indulgence in *eeley*. As a rule, the men are reserved and highly decorous in their treatment of the women; and the girls, though totally free from the prudery that secludes altogether or averts the head of a Hindoo or Mahomedan maiden when seen by a man, have a modest demeanour, combined with frank open manners and womanly grace.

It is said by some that at the seasons of their great festivals amongst themselves, breaches of chastity are of frequent occurrence; but the mere freedom of intercourse allowed to the sexes is likely to be viewed with unmerited prejudice and misconstrued by their neighbours of different race who place such restrictions upon it, and I believe that this may give rise to false imputations of impropriety. It is, at all events, a fact that illegitimate births are rare. Out of her own tribe, a Ho girl is hardly ever known to go astray, though from the freedom allowed to her and, for a tropical climate, the ripe age at which she is likely to be sought in marriage, she must have to pass through many temptations.

The Hos are acutely sensitive under abusive language that at all reflects upon them, and may be and often are driven to commit suicide by an angry word. If a woman appears mortified by anything that has been said, it is unsafe to let her go away till she is soothed. The men are almost as sensitive as the women, and you cannot offend them more than by doubting their word. It has often seemed to me that the more a statement tells against themselves, the more certain they are to tell the exact truth about it. It frequently happens that a man is himself the first person to bring to notice that he has committed a crime; he tells all about it, and deliberately gives himself up to be dealt with according to law.

The Oraon is, I think, less truthful, he is more given to vagabondising, and wandering over the face of the earth in search of employment; he soon loses all the freshness of his character. He returns after an absence of years, unimproved

in appearance, more given to drink and self-indulgence, less genial and truthful than before, with a bag of money that is soon improvidently spent. Those who have never left their own country have far more pleasing manners and dispositions, than those who return to it after years spent in other parts of India or beyond the seas. The fact is, they are not an improvable people. They are best seen in their wild state.

There is no more pleasing trait amongst all these tribes than their kindly affectionate manner one towards another. I never saw girls quarrelling, and never heard them abuse each other. They are the most unspiteful of their sex, and the men never coarsely abuse and seldom speak harshly of the women. This is remarkable on this side of India, where you seldom pass through a bazaar without hearing women screeching indecent abuse at each other across the street, whilst the men look on. A Kol girl's vocabulary is as free from bad language of this kind as a Bengalee's is full of it.

The young Oraons of both sexes are intensely fond of decorating their persons with beads and brass ornaments. These they entirely discard on embracing Christianity, and the converts may be always recognised by the total absence of all such adornment. The converts do not join in the dances or festivals, and must not even be seen as spectators when they are going on. They appear indeed to lose all relish for their old amusements, and shrink with horror at the idea of resuming their discarded ornaments. And as Christianity is rapidly spreading amongst them, and in all probability will continue to spread more and more rapidly every year, it is quite possible that in the course of a few generations the most marked characteristics of the races I am describing, will have been effaced for ever. It is marvellous with what decision old prejudices are abandoned, old customs discarded, and even tastes changed, when they become Christians; and there is now a widespread feeling amongst the Kols themselves that this change will inevitably come upon them all.

The Moondah-Oraon are a rapidly increasing people. We may form some calculation as to the rate of increase by the statistics of the Mission. In 1864 the baptised converts numbered 5,923, and in that year there were 195 births to 80 deaths. In 1865 there were 7,828 baptised Christians, and the births during the year were 309 to 86 deaths. The number of professing Christians is probably double the number registered as baptised.
